

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AID-05 SS-15 INRE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8868
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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HONG KONG FOR ROBERTS (COM CONFERENCE)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EALR PDIP EAID EAGR SWEL AL US
SUBJECT: LPDR APPEAL TO U.S. FOR FOOD AID

1. CHIEFS OF MISSION IN VIENTIANE, JANUARY 4, WERE CALLED TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO RECEIVE INDIVIDUAL APPEALS FOR FOOD AID TO LAOS. AMERICAN CHARGE MET WITH MFA CHEF DE CABINET SOUBANH SRITHIRATH AFTERNOON JANUARY 4. AT MEETING, SOUBANH PRESENTED A FIRST PERSON NOTE FROM MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH TO SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE REQUESTING EMERGENCY FOOD AID. THE NOTE CONTAINS AS AN ENCLOSURE A COPY OF THE LATEST LPDR/UNDP DROUGHT ASSISTANCE REPORT (SEPTTEL). NOTE AND DROUGHT REPORT ARE BEING POUCHED TO EA/VLC.

2. UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION (FROM FRENCH) OF NOTE FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT:
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005/AE.D2

VIENTIANE, JANUARY 3 1978

HIS EXCELLENCY

MR. CYRUS VANCE

SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON

DEAR MR. MINISTER:

A DROUGHT SUCH AS HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN IN THE HISTORY OF THE LAO PEOPLE HAS BEEN SEVERE THIS YEAR THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTRY, WHICH HAS CAUSED CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE TO OUR AGRICULTURE AND CONSEQUENTLY TO THE PRODUCTION OF FOOD, PRINCIPALLY RICE. REPRESENTATIVES OF UNDP AND FAO VISITED THE AREAS AND, IN AGREEMENT WITH THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNTRY, EVALUATED THE LOSSES IN THIS YEAR'S RICE HARVEST AT APPROXIMATELY 259,070 TONS IN RELATION TO THAT OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR, WHICH CAME TO 718,455 TONS. (SIC) (COMMENT: LOSS OF 259,070 TONS IN THE 1977-78 HARVEST IS MEASURED AGAINST THE TOTAL 1976-78 HARVEST OF 718,455 TONS, I.E., TOTAL HARVEST FOR 1977-78 IS ESTIMATED TO BE APPROXIMATELY 459,380 TONS. END COMMENT)

CONSEQUENTLY, FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR OF 1978 WE WILL LACK MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND TONS OF HUSKED RICE, BRINGING DOWN, BY MEANS OF ECONOMIC AUSTERITY, THE AVERAGE CONSUMPTION TO A STRICT VITAL MINIMUM OF TWELVE KILOGRAMS PER PERSON PER MONTH. THE SCARCITY OF FOOD-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STUFFS WILL BE ALMOST TOTAL FROM MARCH TO OCTOBER, 1978.

THIS SITUATION HAS LED THE LAO GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE AN APPEAL FOR EMERGENCY RICE AID FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. AND IT IS ALSO THE REASON FOR WHICH I PERMIT MYSELF TO ADDRESS THIS LETTER TO YOU, ASKING YOU TO INTERVENE WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT IN ORDER THAT IT STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF HELPING US SURMOUNT THESE HARD TRIALS.

EXCELLENCY,

THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, VERY IMPOVERISHED AND BACKWARD IN THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL FIELD, FEELS INCAPABLE OF CONFRONTING, BY ITS OWN MEANS, THIS CATASTROPHIC ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE LAO GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WILL NOT FAIL TO GRANT ITS USUAL BENEVOLENCE TO OUR PEOPLE IN THESE DIFFICULT MOMENTS.

CONVINCED THAT YOUR UNDERSTANDING INTERVENTION WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT CAN BRING IT TO SATISFY OUR SPECIAL URGENT NEEDS AND GRANT THE REQUESTED AID TO THE LAO PEOPLE, I WISH TO EXPRESS TO YOU ALL THE GRATITUDE

OF THE LAO GOVERNMENT AND THANK YOU WARMLY FOR ALL THAT
YOU WILL DO FOR THE LAO PEOPLE.

HOPING FOR A PROMPT RESPONSE ON YOUR PART, I BEG
YOU TO ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCE OF MY HIGHEST
CONSIDERATION.

(SIGNED) PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH, VICE PRIME MINISTER, MINIS-
TER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC.

END TEXT.
MCWILLIAMS

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